

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the careful review of this application and the indication that claims 3-5, 11-17, and 19 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the outstanding Office Action and the references cited therein. The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action and, when coupled with the above amendments, patently distinguish the claims over cited art of record.

In response to the claim objections and rejections, claim 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 19 have been amended herein. Claim 1-2, 4, 7-8, 10, and 18 are cancelled without prejudice. After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 3, 5-6, 9, 11-17, and 19 remain pending in the present application. The amendments made to the claims overcome the objections and rejections noted by the Office Action. No new matter is added by these amendments.

Objections of claims 1, 6, 7, and 19

Claims 1, 6, 7, and 19 were objected to for certain informalities. The Examiner is thanked for suggesting corrections to the various noted informalities. In response, Applicant has carefully amended the claim terms according to the Examiner's suggestion. Applicant has also made additional appropriate modifications to correct other noted informalities. As amended, claims 1, 6, 7, and 19 are believed to overcome the objections.

The Office Action also objected to the drawings as allegedly failing to show features recited in claim 7. Although Applicant disagrees, claim 7 has been canceled to render this rejection moot.

Discussion of Claim Rejections

The Examiner admitted that claims 3-5, 11-17, and 19 contained allowable subject matter. In reliance on this, claim 3 is rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim 1 and intervening claim 4. Claims 5, 11-17, and 19 are amended and thus in condition of allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8-10, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Miyake et al. (U.S. Patent 6,580,684) in view of Shishido et al. (U.S. Patent 6,785,213)

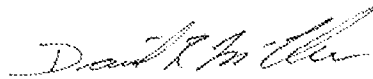
In response, claims 1-2, 8, 10, and 18 are cancelled without prejudice, rendering the rejections moot as to those claims. Claims 6 and 9 have been amended to depend from claim 3, which was indicated to define allowable subject matter. Therefore, claims 6 and 9 are now allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 3.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims 3, 5, 6, 9, 11-17 and 19 as currently presented are in condition for allowance and hereby requests reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

It is not believed that any fees are required, beyond those, which may otherwise be provided for in the documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional fees are necessary, such fees are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daniel R. McClure", written in dark ink.

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